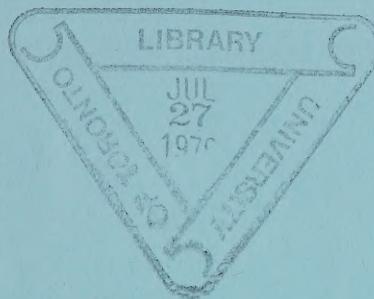


LOCAL GOVERNMENT DIVISION

BULLETIN 23

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TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF IN SMALL MUNICIPALITIES



Ontario Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Thomas L. Wells
Minister

D. W. Stevenson
Deputy Minister

3 Municipal Administration Branch
Local Government Division, April 1979

To the Municipal Clerk:

Please circulate this bulletin or make copies for distribution to councillors or staff of your municipality who may be interested in the subject. Additional copies are available at fifty cents each from the Publications Centre (see page 13).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
WHEN DO I NEED A TRAINING COURSE?	2
HOW TO SELECT TRAINING ACTIVITIES	4
COUNCIL'S ROLE IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES	6
SOME RECOGNIZED TRAINING RESOURCES	9



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INTRODUCTION

The question of training for municipal-government staff members has changed a great deal in the last few years. The question used to be "Why do I need to get involved in a training course?" The question today is more likely to be "Where do I find a good training course?"

This change in attitude was found at first among the appointed staff members. To a large extent it grew from the professional-development activities of the various associations. Council members have also adopted this new attitude, not only as it applies to training for¹ staff, but training activities for themselves.

This bulletin examines methods of assessing training needs, and looks at available training opportunities that have been found to be suitable for staff members in small municipalities and for junior staff members in larger municipalities. The bulletin does not pretend to incorporate all training opportunities or to recommend specific courses. It should be used only as a guide to the available courses of action.

¹ For a more thorough examination of attitudes toward training, see Discussion Paper #5: Education/Training/Development from the study Managers For Local Government. Copies are available for \$.50 from Publications Centre, 880 Bay Street, 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8.

WHEN DO I NEED A TRAINING COURSE?

Nearly everyone can recognize the need for personal development in specific areas. If the office secretary is away and a letter needs to be written, we all make a mental note to learn how to type quickly and accurately. When we can't get our cars started on cold mornings we tuck away the idea that some day we will take a course in auto mechanics. These ideas usually stay on "file" until the problem arises again, and we have to run into a problem several times before we do anything about it.

Sometimes we are the last to know when we need training. We may be working along, using the techniques that have always been used, while there may be a new technique that would cut down our work load, or at least the time consumed by the work. It could be that we think we are doing a good job, but everyone else thinks it could be better - with a little training.

There are three basic reasons for going on a training course:

- when you want to learn about something, or learn more about it;
- when you need to learn how to do something, or more about how to do it;
- when someone tells you you need to learn.

It is usually best to undertake training or education activities while you are in the "want to know" stage. This suggests that you are keeping up with developments in your field, and that as you become aware of new concepts or practices you set out to learn about them before you have to be fully aware of the details involved in them.

If you wait until the second stage, or until you "need to know", you may find that the training program does not meet your expectations. It is likely that something has happened on the job that you were unable to handle, or that something is imminent. A training course may not be readily available, or even if it is, you will likely not be able to pick up enough "how to" quickly enough to satisfy your pressing need.

Of course, if you wait until someone tells you you need to learn, you will be going off for training for all the wrong reasons. You might not be able to accept that you lack expertise in the field, or understand the need for any expertise. You probably will not gain very much from the training exercise.

Since your needs for training likely coincide with your municipality's needs for expertise, it is always best to establish your learning program in conjunction with your boss. If you report to a member of the administrative staff, you should discuss your plans with that person, if for no other reason than to keep the boss informed of what you are doing. If the boss agrees with your plan you are more likely to get financial assistance and perhaps other compensation. You will also be showing your willingness to learn, and demonstrating your desire for advancement. If you are in a "one man" office you should discuss your plans with council, or perhaps the head of council, for exactly the same reasons.

HOW TO SELECT TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Most people have found that this is the most difficult part in the entire training procedure. Where do you start? Who can you go to for advice?

Step 1

Perhaps the first thing to do is to list all the individual things you would like to learn more about. This might include such things as report writing, taking of minutes, law, land-use planning, book-keeping, computers, filing... Obviously, if your list is this long you will not be able to find any single course that will meet your requirements, and if you took a separate course on each you might still be going to school after you have retired. You probably also don't feel the need for a regular college or university course in most of these areas. What you really want is either to brush up your expertise or develop enough awareness to be able to communicate effectively with the experts who will be working with you in those areas.

Step 2

Select your priorities. Which of the items on your list need attention first? You may also find it easier to deal with your list if you group the topics into categories such as treasury field, clerk's field, roads field, management, etc.

Step 3

Start hunting around for available training opportunities. If you belong to one of the municipal associations, that will be a good place to begin. Check with the association for the seminars or workshops that are coming up. If any of these satisfies your needs, you will be well on your way. One of your colleagues in a neighbouring municipality might also be able to help you become aware of training opportunities.

Once you have gone through this procedure, you should take your "needs list" to a community college in your area. Compare what you want to learn with the topics covered in the courses offered by the college. You would be very lucky to find that all of your needs are met by a specific course, but you will undoubtedly discover a course that incorporates at least a good portion of your list.

Step 5

Go back to the drawing board. Compare your original list of needs to the training opportunities you have discovered. If there are any big gaps - perhaps nothing available in the field of law - then you have a real problem. You might be able to solve this by having long lunches with a local lawyer, but a better way might be to ask your association to offer a seminar or workshop in that area. Remember, if you are having a problem in a specific area, there are probably many others with the same problem.

Step 6

Repeat this process every year or two. Municipal government is continuously changing, and the training needs change just as quickly. Some of the current "buzz words", such as zero-based budgeting, management by objectives, management by results, environmental planning, cash management, might help you reach answers to current or anticipated problems. An understanding of their implications couldn't hurt, and it just might help. And more than that, since you have already gone through one series of training activities, you are now fully aware of the need to keep ahead of your field, not just keep up with it.

COUNCIL'S ROLE IN TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Good training is as important to the employer who needs work well done as it is to the employee who must do the work well. Most employers in the private sector set aside a specific amount in each year's budget for training purposes. No employer could hope to maintain a good business without keeping his staff fully aware of modern developments in the field. No employer could expect to have good managers without making sure that his management group was able to practice those techniques of management that are useful in his specific area.

In private enterprise employers take an active role in seeking out training opportunities, and in making sure that staff members can be involved in these activities. This usually involves not only paying the costs of courses or seminars, but allowing time off or giving some other compensation.

It is not unusual in private enterprise for as much as three per cent of the annual salary budget to be allocated to staff training and development.

In the study *Managers for Local Government*¹ a number of facts concerning training for municipal staff members were reported. The data were based on questionnaire responses by both administrators and council members across the province. Among the findings were:

- over half the municipalities in Ontario have no policy concerning training and development of staff members;
- only about 20 per cent of the municipalities have a budget for training and development;
- 95 per cent of the council members feel their staff members should be involved in training and development activities;
- more council members than staff members feel there is a positive attitude toward training within the municipality;
- less than one-third of the municipalities pay all the costs associated with training courses or seminars.

¹See particularly Discussion Paper #5, *Education/Training/Development*, available from Publications Centre, 800 Bay St., 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8, for \$.50 each.

These facts indicate strongly that there are very different attitudes toward training in private and public enterprise. The difference is particularly noticeable among council members, where there is overwhelming approval of training and development in principle, but very little in the way of policy or money to back it up.

If it is important for an individual to formally set out a personal training program, it is equally as important for the municipality to do the same thing, and to make sure that impediments to such a program are eliminated.

Things that council members can do to encourage training programs and to see to it that the municipality has the best and most up-to-date expertise include:

- establishing a formal budget for training and development. This will indicate to staff members that the council is fully in favour of such activities;
- establishing a policy on how much of any training activity will be paid for by the municipality;
- keeping abreast of training activities, and making sure that staff members are also aware of them;
- being prepared to offer incentives to staff members, such as time off for attendance at training activities that fall outside the normal working day;
- helping staff members introduce new techniques or concepts that have been learned during training sessions and that are useful to your specific situation. Nothing will defeat a training program more quickly than learning a better way to do something, but finding out that no one will let you use that method;
- asking staff members to prepare plans for training, either for themselves or for the entire staff, and making sure there is time during committee meetings to discuss the plans;

- being prepared to pay all the costs of training activities that will directly benefit the municipality, and a suitable portion of those courses where the benefit is less direct;
- encouraging staff members to join appropriate municipal associations, and to attend annual conferences and seminars where much of their training needs may be met.

SOME RECOGNIZED TRAINING RESOURCES

There is a fairly wide variety of resources available to staff (and council) members of small municipalities. Several courses are offered through correspondence and others are available through lectures at community colleges or universities. Some of the courses offered through extension by your local secondary school may also meet your requirements. The easiest way to determine what is available is to ask the educational institution to mail you a copy of its calendar. Check through the available courses to see which correspond to your needs, and then talk to people at the school to ensure that you make the right choice of courses.

A good portion of your training needs may also be met through workshops and seminars sponsored by the various municipal associations or through the individual provincial ministries. Good examples are the seminars offered through the Municipal Finance Officers Association, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Municipal Engineers Association, International City Management Association, and the workshops included at the annual conference of most municipal groups.

Some of your training needs may also be satisfied through articles and reports contained in the many magazines and newsletters aimed specifically at the municipal-government community. A small library of the recognized text books on municipal government would be invaluable. Many good books and magazines can be purchased for less than the cost of many courses.

The following are examples of established training resources that are specially designed for municipal people. While none of the examples is likely to meet all your needs and should not be considered as the complete answer to staff development, each can provide a good understanding of the specific field.

1. The Municipal Administration Program of the Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (A.M.C.T.)

This program, first started 20 years ago, is now being completely revised. The original program involved three years of correspondence study, with

about 11 lessons in each year. The new format envisages five different "units" with perhaps seven or eight lessons in each unit. The first two units will be compulsory, and students will have to select two from the remaining three units to satisfy requirements for the designation "A.M.C.T." The new format will be available in the fall of 1979.

There are, at present, two ways of completing the A.M.C.T. program. You can enroll in the correspondence section or you can attend one of the community colleges that offers the same program in lecture format. The college programs generally involve one evening of study per week for about 30 weeks.

The A.M.C.T. course is widely recognized as a basic requirement within clerks' and treasurers' departments throughout Ontario. Most job postings for small municipalities list the A.M.C.T. course as a highly desirable qualification.

For information on the correspondence course contact:

Gordon Gunning, A.M.C.T.
Secretary-Treasurer
Association of Municipal Clerks
and Treasurers of Ontario
100 University Avenue, Suite 1108
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 1V6
Telephone (416) 593-1400

For information on the lecture format for this course contact the community college closest to you where the course is offered:

Dr. Richard Tindal
St. Lawrence College of
Applied Arts and Technology
Kingston Campus
Portsmouth Avenue
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 5A6
Telephone (613) 544-5400

Bowman Andrews
Seneca College of Applied
Arts and Technology
1750 Finch Avenue East
Willowdale, Ontario
M2N 5T7
Telephone (416) 491-5050

John Geoghegan
Fanshawe College of Applied
Arts and Technology
P.O. Box 4005, Terminal "C"
London, Ontario
N5W 5H1
Telephone (519) 451-7270

Gail Hillyer
Niagara College of Applied
Arts and Technology
Woodlawn Road
Welland, Ontario
L3B 5S2
Telephone (416) 735-2211

Fred Anderson
Sir Sanford Fleming College
of Applied Arts and Technology
MacDonnel Street
Peterborough, Ontario
K9J 7B1
Telephone (705) 743-5624

2. The Municipal Accounting Course, jointly sponsored by The Society of Management Accountants of Ontario and A.M.C.T.O.

This course, intended for those who already have some background in the field of accounting, is a combination of home study and group seminars. Students submit written assignments for each of the 14 lessons. There are four full-day seminars included in the course.

For further information contact:

Mrs. Doreen Wilson
Society of Management Accountants
of Ontario
P.O. Box 176
Hamilton, Ontario
L8N 9Z9
Telephone (416) 525-1400

3. Road Schools conducted by The Ontario Good Roads Association.

Each year the O.G.R.A. offers training programs designed specifically for senior staff members in roads departments. This year the T.J. Mahoney and C.S. Anderson Roads Schools will be held concurrently at the University of Guelph from Sunday, May 6, to Wednesday, May 9. Both schools are operated in the classroom format.

In the Mahoney School there are six classes of 30-35 people that will cover 15 road and bridge maintenance-related subjects. In the Anderson School 11 distinct courses will be given, with registrants in each spending three days on the specific subject.

Class size varies from 30-40 people.

In addition to the two schools at Guelph, the Association sponsors three road schools in Northern Ontario. All are in the classroom format. This year the schools will be held in:

Thunder Bay	June 5-6
Sudbury	October 2-3
Huntsville	October 22-23

For further information contact:

B. J. McCaffery
Secretary-Treasurer
Ontario Good Roads Association
Box 128
St. Thomas, Ontario
N5P 3T7
Telephone (519) 631-6820

4. Courses Offered by the Ontario Civil Service Commission

Training and development courses offered by the Ontario Civil Service Commission are now available to municipal members. As some of the courses are very popular, it may not be possible to accept all municipal nominations for a specific course. However, those that are rejected because of over-enrollment may be renominated for a similar course to be held at a future date.

No attempt will be made to place a priority on municipal nominations. They will be dealt with on a "first come, first served" basis. Municipalities, of course, will be responsible for paying all of the tuition, travel, and accommodation costs involved in sending staff to these courses.

Copies of the Civil Service Commission Staff Development Calendar and nomination forms are available from the Field Services Branch offices listed at the end of this Bulletin. The nomination form should be completed and submitted by the municipality to the Personnel Administration Branch, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs, 56 Wellesley Street West, Toronto, M7A 1Y7. The Personnel Branch will forward the forms to the Civil Service Commission, and notify municipalities whether or not their nominations have been accepted.

This bulletin was prepared in the:

Municipal Administration Branch
 Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs
 56 Wellesley Street West
 Toronto, Ontario
 M7A 1Y7

Tel. 416-965-3514

Previous bulletins issued in this series:

1	Highlights of The Municipal Elections Act, 1977	12	Dismissal
2	Conflict of Interest in Municipal Government	13	Labour Relations -- Components of a Collective Agreement
3	Amendments to The Municipal Elections Act, 1977	14	The Head of Council
4	Council Agenda and Minutes -- Committee Agenda and Reports	15	An Act to Amend The Municipal Act (Bill 80) Remuneration and Expenses
5	An Alphabetical Filing System Suitable for a Small Municipality	16	Municipal Staff Reports
6	Bargaining Information	17	Council Committees
7	Drafting Municipal By-laws	18	Liability Protection
8	Municipal Insurance	19	Summary of 1978 Legislation Respecting Remuneration and Expenses
9	The Municipality and the Law	20	Microrecording
10	Labour Relations -- The Organizing Process	21	Holidays and Time Calculations
11	Procedure By-law	22	Minicomputers (being printed)

Copies of all the bulletins in this series are available at \$0.50 each, prepaid, from:

Publications Centre
 880 Bay Street, 5th Floor
 Toronto, Ontario
 M7A 1N8

(Please make cheques payable to the Treasurer of Ontario.)

A series of Financial Procedures Bulletins is being issued by the Municipal Budgets and Accounts Branch. Copies are available at \$1.00 each from the Publications Centre. Titles now available are:

- F.1 Cash Management in Municipalities
- F.2 Bank Reconciliation Procedure for Municipalities
- F.3 Municipal Investments

For additional information on this subject, get in touch with any of the field officers of the Local Government Division. They are located at these addresses:

BRANTFORD

172 Dalhousie St.
Brantford, Ontario
N3T 2J7
(519) 756-0360

ORILLIA

15B Matchedash St. N.
Orillia, Ontario
L3V 4T4
(705) 325-6144

GUELPH

30 Edinburgh Road N.
Guelph, Ontario
N1H 7J1
(519) 836-2531

OSHAWA

74 Simcoe St. S.
P.O. Box 2216
Oshawa, Ontario
L1H 7V5
(416) 571-1515

KINGSTON

1055 Princess St.
Kingston, Ontario
K7L 5T3
(613) 546-5565

OTTAWA

244 Rideau St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 5Y3
(613) 232-9446

LONDON

495 Richmond St.
London, Ontario
N6A 5A9
(519) 438-7255

SUDBURY

1349 LaSalle Blvd.
Sudbury, Ontario
P3A 1Z2
(705) 566-0901

NORTH BAY

347 Sherbrooke St.
North Bay, Ontario
P1B 2C1
(705) 476-4300

THUNDER BAY

435 James St. S.
P.O. Box 5000
Thunder Bay, Ontario
P7C 5G6
(807) 475-1621

